

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
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DRAFTED BY ARA-LA/PAN:DLAZAR:LKB
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 113213

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE

1. FOLLOWING GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR NOON BRIEFING TUESDAY, MAY 17. "Q: WHEN WILL THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY TALKS RECOMMENCE? A: WE DO NOT YET HAVE A DATE, BUT WE EXPECT IT TO BE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. WE ARE WAITING TO HEAR FROM THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS. Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE MARLISE SIMMONS STORY FROM PANAMA IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST? A: AS YOU KNOW, THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE CONSULTING AMONG THEMSELVES ABOUT MANY ISSUES INVOLVED IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. THEY WILL BE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON SOON TO RESUME THE CURRENT ROUND OF TALKS. WE HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS TO DATE AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO MOVING FORWARD WHEN THE PANAMANIAN TEAM RETURNS. MEANTIME, I THINK IT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO COMMENT OFFICIALLY ON AN UNOFFICIAL REPORT THAT MAY--OR MAY NOT--BE A COMPLETE REFLECTION OF PANAMA'S POSITION ON SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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TREATY-MAKING PROCESS."

2. FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT NOON BRIEFING.
"Q: FRED, THE WASHINGTON POST QUOTES GENERAL TORRIJOS THIS MORNING AS SAYING--QUOTE--"PANAMA CAN ACCEPT THE U.S. RIGHT TO INTERVENE AGAINST A THIRD COUNTRY TO PROTECT THE

NEUTRALITY OF THE CANAL." AND IN THE SAME STORY, THE POST ALSO QUOTES TORRIJOS AS SAYING--QUOTE--"WE WILL NOT ACCEPT ANYTHING IN WRITING THAT CAN JUSTIFY AN AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN THE FUTURE." AND I WOULD LIKE TO ASK, WHAT IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO THESE APPARENTLY CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS, OR DO YOU FIND NO CONTRADICTION, OR WHAT? A: OUR REACTION IS THAT THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE CONSULTING AMONG THEMSELVES ABOUT MANY ISSUES INVOLVED IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. WE EXPECT THEM BACK IN WASHINGTON VERY SOON TO RESUME THE CURRENT ROUND OF TALKS.

WE HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS TO DATE, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO MOVING AHEAD WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS, AS SOON AS THE PANAMANIAN TEAM GETS BACK.

FOR THE TIME BEING, IT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO COMMENT OFFICIALLY ON AN UNOFFICIAL REPORT THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE A COMPLETE REFLECTION OF PANAMA'S POSITION ON SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE TREATY-MAKING PROCESS.

Q: COULD YOU REFRESH MY MEMORY, FRED? HAVE OUR NEGOTIATORS GENERALLY AGREED IN A NUMBER OF POINTS THAT WERE AGREED TO, I THINK, IN THE KISSINGER-TACK? IS THERE ANY FEELING THAT WE ARE GOING TO AGREE WITH TOTAL U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CANAL ZONE, SO THAT ANY INTERVENTION WILL HAVE TO COME FROM PUERTO RICO OR TEXAS, IF NECESSARY? HAVE WE STIPULATED THAT AMONG THE POINTS THAT WE CONCEDE?

A: LES, I HAVE STAYED VERY CAREFULLY AWAY FROM MAKING UNCLASSIFIED

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ANY KIND OF COMMENT ON THE SUBSTANCE --

Q: NO, I JUST WANT TO KNOW ABOUT PAST HISTORY, NOT WHAT IS NOW. HAVE WE AGREED TO THAT MUCH OR NOT? WAS THAT ONE OF THE KISSINGER-TACK PROPOSALS?

A: AS FAR AS I KNOW, THE KISSINGER-TACK PROPOSALS ARE STILL IN EFFECT. BEYOND THAT, I CAN'T OFFER YOU ANYTHING ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

Q: FRED, THERE SEEMS TO BE A MUTUAL AGREEMENT NOT TO TALK ABOUT THESE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT IN THE SAME STORY MR. TORRIJOS SAID THAT HE HAS GIVEN MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS TO THE PRESIDENTS OF FOUR COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA. AND IT WONDER IS HE VIOLATING THE AGREEMENT, OR WHY AREN'T WE GETTING ANYTHING HERE IF HE IS GIVING IT OUT?

A: JUAN, I WOULD JUST AS SOON STAY AWAY FROM MAKING ANY

COMMENT ON THE CONTENTS OF THE STORY THAT YOU ARE
REFERRING TO--JUST NOT OFFER ANYTHING ON THAT. I DON'T
THINK IT WOULD BE HELPFUL.

Q: ANY COMMENT ON THE FACT THAT THE PANAMANIANIS ARE
APPARENTLY GIVING OUT MINUTES OF THE MEETING, AS IT SAID
IN THE STORY?

A: NO, I DON'T HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT." CHRISTOPHER

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